

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
College of Health and Human Performance
Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management

LEI 6834: Ecotourism (3 credits)
Wednesdays: 4:05 – 7:05 p.m., 245 Florida Gym Building
Spring 2009

Instructor: Dr. Brijesh Thapa
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday @ 9:00 – 11:00 am, and by appointment

Required Books: Weaver, D. (ed.). (2001). *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism*. New York: CABI.

Page, S., & Dowling, R. (2002). *Ecotourism*. London: Prentice Hall.

Fennell, D. (2003). *Ecotourism(2nd Edition)*. New York: Routledge.

Honey, M. (2008). *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise? (2nd Edition)*. Washington, D.C.: Island.

Case studies will also be used and can be purchased and instantly downloaded from Harvard Business School for \$6.50 each.
<http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu>

The case studies are:

- 1) Morgan's Rock Hacienda and Ecolodge
- 2) Elephant Walk Thru
- 3) Posada Amazonas
- 4) Windhoek Nature Reserve: Financing a Sustainable Conservation Model in Namibia

The following case studies will be from this book.

Herremans, I. (2006). *Cases in Sustainable Tourism: An Experiential Approach to Making Decisions*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

- 1) A Journey to Define Sustainability: Waterton Lakes National Park
- 2) Costa Rica: Banana Plantations or Ecotourism?
- 3) CAMPFIRE: A Sustainable Use of Wildlife Resources?
- 4) Ecotourism in Extractive Reserves in Brazil

Additional readings as assigned on a weekly basis will be available on the course E-Learning website (see Outline of Topics).

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide an understanding of the concept of ecotourism. Theory, practice, history, terminology and issues in ecotourism planning and management will be examined. Additionally, basic survey of ecotourism components: motives and behaviors of tourists, natural resources as attractions and destinations, social and resource responsibility and establishing policies and principles for sustainability will be discussed.

Course Objectives:

1. Understanding the definitions, terminology and concepts of ecotourism and how it relates to generic tourism.
2. Understanding of the history and development of natural resource attractions and demand for recreation and tourism opportunities at such attractions.
3. Understanding of impacts associated with multiple uses of natural resources.
4. Understanding of the demand-supply, carrying capacity, economic benefits and sustainability issues inherent in long-term and successful ecotourism developments.
5. Understanding basic planning and management guidelines for ecotourism development from a national and international perspective.
6. Understanding ethics (codes of conduct, compliance and eco-labeling/certification) in ecotourism.

Class Policies:

1. All assignments must be typed and should follow the A.P.A. (American Psychological Association) format.
2. Late assignments will not be accepted.
3. Attendance will be taken throughout the semester. If a student misses more than 2 class periods, their respective grade will drop 1 letter. If 3 or more misses are recorded, then the grade will be an automatic "E".
4. Students are required to stay the entire duration of the class period and try to be on time.
5. If a student has a need for special test taking or note taking accommodations due to a disability, it is their responsibility to let the instructor know as soon as possible.

Course Requirements:

This seminar-oriented class will be based upon student participation & discussion, guest speakers, videos and other supplementary materials. For each class period, there will be discussion leaders (group of two students) who will be responsible for leading the class discussion on assigned readings. Based on the week's topic, the discussion leaders will prepare a brief analysis/synopsis and stimulate class discussion. The discussion leaders may elect to lay more emphasis on certain assigned readings; however, need to integrate all the readings. Analysis should draw attention to the importance of the topic, the conceptual/theoretical orientation of the article/s, and ideas or concepts that seem to be controversial and subsequently fosters discussion. It is **required** for the weekly leaders to meet with the instructor to discuss the readings **prior** to the day of the class.

Based on the readings, each student is required to formulate three or more questions to be used for discussion. The questions must be **typed** and later submitted to the instructor at the end of the class period. Each student is expected to share in discussion and express ideas and opinions

relevant to the topic during the course. The class participation grade is based on answers, ideas and informed opinions expressed by the student in class.

Country Specific Presentations (Option 1)

Each student will be responsible for either presenting a country specific (option 1) or a site visit (option 2) case study in class. In Honey's (2008) book (chapters 4-7), seven country specific cases are outlined (Galapagos, Costa Rica, Cuba, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Kenya, South Africa), which will be used and supplemented by other sources. However, for each country, an analysis based on a case study should also be included. Additional countries may be assigned based on students' choice.

Site Visit Presentations (Option 2)

Students will have the option of self-selection and site visit to an ecotourism destination. Find out relevant information about the destination and/or attraction; the role the service provider plays in the tourism industry, and the types and number of tourists it serves. Include any other information that may be pertinent to the course material. Since true domestic ecotourism sites in the region are somewhat hard to find, criteria will not be strictly applied. Preference is to target private enterprise based attractions, however, government operated sites would be acceptable based on clear rationale. The sites need to be **approved** by the instructor. The proposed site does not have to be based in Florida, however a site visit is **required**.

For **either option**, each designated presenter will give a 20-minute presentation (handouts would be useful for the class to follow), perhaps supplementing it with maps, web page pictures, etc. Then, the presenter will lead an interactive dialogue with the class about the major points, pros, cons, weaknesses, and conclusions. Based on the research and respective presentation, students are required to write a paper (about 8-10 pages, double-spaced). Overall, students will be graded by the quality and thoroughness of the article(s) summary, use of additional sources, presentation, quality of group discussion and the respective paper.

Case Analysis

The Cases will be analyzed in teams (2-3 members) and each team will be responsible for the following:

- Analyze one case study and deliver oral presentations and written analysis which is to be submitted on the day of the presentation. All team members must participate in the presentation.
- Oral presentation is limited to 25 minutes. Written analysis is limited to 5 double-spaced typewritten pages, excluding appendices which are limited to 4 pages.
- An update of the case since it was written. New information can be accessed through various mediums, such as the internet and other publication outlets.
- Although each team will be responsible for one written and oral presentation, **all students are required to read and come prepared to class** on the day of the respective case presentation.

The Sustainable Tourism Cases will be analyzed collectively in class and will be lead by the respective weekly discussion leader. **Each assigned case study needs to be read prior to class** to facilitate team decision making analysis. More details will be communicated in class.

Research Paper (Due: April 15th, 2009)

Each student is required to submit a research paper based on an in-depth examination of an ecotourism subject. The topic may be based on one of the major topics covered in class. However, each student is **required** to get prior approval of the topic from the instructor by submitting an outline (1-2 pages) for the proposed paper. There is a **final deadline** (March 25th, 2009) with respect to topic approval but an early start is highly recommended. Besides the paper, each student is expected to make a 20-minute presentation of their paper and respond to questions for 5 minutes during the last two class periods. Also, if needed, presentations may be also scheduled during the formal exam period.

As a guideline, graduate students are expected to complete a minimum of 18 pages with 16 refs and at least 10 from journal articles (at least 4 must be different from those listed on reading list). Paper must be typed (1 inch margins), double-spaced pages in length and should at least include the following sections:

- I. Introduction
 - Importance of study to topic
 - Direction of the research paper
 - Objective (“problem statement”)
- II. Related Literature Review
 - Theoretical foundation
 - Synthesis of literature review
- III. Case Study or Methods and Results
- IV. Discussion and Conclusion
 - Comparison of results/analysis with the literature
 - Answers to “so what questions”
 - Identification of further research areas
- V. References

Evaluation:

Class Participation (weekly questions/discussion/assignments)	25%
Performance as weekly Discussion Leader	5%
Country/Site Study (presentation/paper) evaluation (Option 1 or 2)	20%
Case Analysis (presentation/paper)	15%
Final Research Paper	30%
Final Research Paper Presentation	5%

TENATIVE COURSE CALENDER*

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Date	Topics
1/7	Introduction to the Course: Outline, Requirements and Expectations
1/14	Tourism and Sustainability
1/21	Ecotourism: Operational Definition & Market Segmentation
1/28	Natural Resources, Conservation and Parks
2/4	Conservation Finance
2/11	Ecotourism and Local Communities
2/18	Ecotourism: Social and Ecological Impacts
2/25	Economics and the Business of Ecotourism
3/4	Ecotourism Planning & Management
3/11	Spring Break (no class)
3/18	Ecotourism and Certification
3/25	Ecotourism Development: International Perspectives
4/1	Ecotourism Development: United States and Florida
4/8	Future of Ecotourism and Field Trip
4/15	Research Paper Presentations
4/22	Research Paper Presentations

***The course schedule is tentative and subject to modifications. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of changes announced in class such as guest speakers, presentation days, etc.**